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January 9, 1985

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION  
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 158

UNITED STATES POLICY IN SOUTHEAST ASIA  
(The Kampuchea Problem) ~~(S)~~

I have reviewed the interagency study on Kampuchea, NSSD 2-84. Our interests and objectives, the basic policy lines and strategy are approved as outlined below. ~~(S)~~

UNITED STATES INTERESTS AND OBJECTIVES

-- Global as well as regional US interests are affected by the situation in Kampuchea and its outcome. To protect these interests we seek to restore a neutral Kampuchea as a buffer between Thailand and Vietnam; to minimize Soviet influence and presence in the area; and to enhance cooperation with ASEAN in ways that also enhances or does not significantly harm our China relationship. ~~(S)~~

KEY ELEMENTS

-- Thailand -- its security interests, and stability along its border with Kampuchea -- is central. Despite differences of perception, the ASEANs all regard Thailand as the "front line" state, and its interests as paramount. China currently plays a constructive role, but Thailand should not become overly dependent on China.

[REDACTED]

-- ASEAN's goal is a negotiated, compromise solution, leading to a Vietnamese withdrawal. A return to power by the Khmer Rouge would be unacceptable to the ASEANs. The ASEANs want us to play a greater role in supporting the non-communist resistance.

[REDACTED]

-- China provides generous [REDACTED] support to the Khmer Rouge, and insists that it play a full role at the present time in coalition political and military affairs. China has said it [REDACTED] accept the results of a genuine choice by the Khmer people. Beijing provides [REDACTED]

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Partially Declassified/Released on 10/31/90  
under provisions of E.O. 12356-  
by S. Tiley, National Security Council

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[REDACTED] support to the non-communist factions in limited quantities. It is possible that China's and ASEAN's policies will diverge in the future. ~~DX~~

-- Vietnam's motivations in Kampuchea include fear of Chinese influence on its western flank, and a desire to extend its hegemony throughout the former French Indochina. Consolidating its hold on Kampuchea, however, would be arduous and lengthy. At a minimum Vietnam would want influence over any government in Phnom Penh and a veto over policies and actions that could threaten Hanoi's interests. ~~DX~~

-- Moscow's subsidies for Vietnam's Kampuchean military venture are costly and inhibit better relations with ASEAN, but provide it with a secure base of influence and access to military facilities on China's southern flank. [REDACTED]

#### SIGNIFICANT VARIABLES

-- Non-communist military forces are weak, but they started from a low base and are growing. Growth of Khmer Rouge strength and influence, to the point where it appeared ASEAN/US/China policies would lead to its return to power, would have very destructive effects. ~~DX~~

-- Questions remain about China's willingness to accept a solution short of Khmer Rouge restoration; about the effect of Sino-Soviet talks on prospects for a Kampuchea solution; about the long-term effect of Vietnam's occupation on Khmer nationalist attitudes; and about the course of Soviet-Vietnamese relations. ~~DX~~

#### UNITED STATES STRATEGY

-- The US should continue the main lines of current policies. An outcome acceptable to ASEAN -- as long as it includes a strong non-communist role -- is likely to be acceptable to us. We should follow ASEAN's lead rather than getting out front [REDACTED] but be flexible and hold out the prospect of dialogue should the SRV be willing to negotiate a settlement (and adequately address POW/MIA resolution); continue to provide diplomatic and humanitarian support for Sihanouk and Son Sann; and eschew contact with the Khmer Rouge. ~~DX~~

-- The US should work closely with ASEAN to ensure that the non-communist resistance elements grow in strength and influence vis-a-vis the Khmer Rouge as well as the Vietnamese.

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China should be encouraged to [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] remove the most infamous Khmer Rouge leaders responsible for the atrocities of 1975-78; and not pursue a Khmer Rouge return to power as part of a political solution. (S)

-- Broader support for Thai and ASEAN security as a whole will reinforce our Kampuchea policies. [REDACTED]

In a related vein, Thailand should be reassured it will not be left with a residual refugee population. (S)

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